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MAYOR

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SB642

March 9, 2023

TO: Members of the Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters Committees
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 642 - Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program
POSITION: Support

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB)642.

SB 642 establishes the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase reuse and recycling of beverage containers. By providing the infrastructure for the stewardship of beverage containers, this bill supports local governments with meeting waste reduction goals and preventing post-consumer waste from entering the environment, especially our waterways. Beverage containers covered under the bill include glass, aluminum and plastic bottles. The bill specifies a goal to achieve a 90% redemption rate in the bill, which would be about 5 billion single-use beverage containers. Though the exact number that would benefit Baltimore City is not known, this target will have significant impacts on the city's waste management strategies that divert and prevent waste. SB 642 holds the prospect of reducing the cost of litter and beverage containers collection, recycling and disposal currently imposed on Baltimore City taxpayers.

Programming outlined in the bill also aligns with a goal in the 2019 Sustainability Plan to in our Waste and Recycling, Water in the Environment, and waste reduction goals in Mayor Scott's Term 1 Action Plan:

Waste and Recycling Chapter
Strategy 1: Pursue legislative and policy changes to reduce the waste stream. Action 1
Water in the Environment Chapter

Chapter "Investigate revising codes and/or creating ordinances to eliminate waste and maximize reuse of materials." (strategy 3, action 4) and to "Develop and promote legislation and policy at the City and State level to reduce pollution of our waterways, including restricting the use of pesticides and herbicides and reducing the use of single-use plastics (such as plastic bags and beverage bottles) (strategy 2, action 4, pp 112).

Non-recyclable materials like plastic bags, polystyrene containers, and beverage containers make up as much as half of the litter polluting local streets and waterways. In 2018, the City Council passed a ban on polystyrene containers for carryout food and drinks by a unanimous vote, the Baltimore City Public School Board voted to phase out Styrofoam trays from school cafeterias in favor of compostable trays and in October 2021 Baltimore City passed a plastic bag ban. These bill have proven themselves to be effective waste prevention, behavior change and zero waste planning tools for local governments. The proposed bottle bill will help regulate post-consumer waste across the state,

aid local governments with litter prevention/reduction allowing Maryland to shift from waste as a liability to waste as an asset; a way to create good paying, local jobs tied to a workforce development pipeline.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB 642 as the bill aligns with citywide goals in the city's 2019 Sustainability Plan, city and statewide emission reduction goals and helps to better prioritize state subsidies for truly renewable energy.